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Apple just endorsed AT&T's fake 5G E network

5G

New networking standard, same old scam

By Chaim Gartenberg | @cgartenberg | Feb 4, 2019, 4:55pm EST

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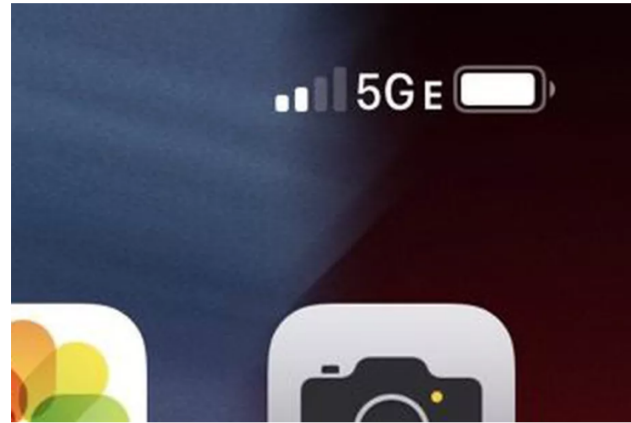


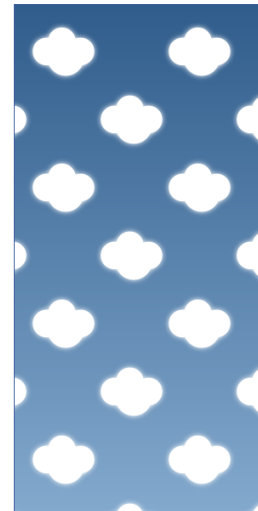
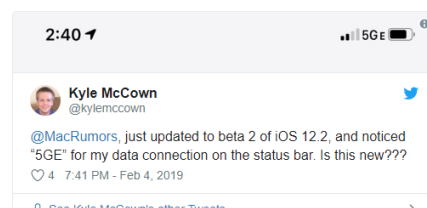
Image: MacRumors

There are [no 5G iPhones](#), and there probably won't be 5G iPhones for a while. But that isn't stopping Apple and AT&T: they are reportedly rolling out AT&T's fake "5G E" branding with its upcoming iOS 12.2 update, according to a report [from MacRumors](#). Much like when the two companies [pulled this scam with 4G and LTE back in 2012](#), if you can't beat them, you roll out a software update to make it look like you did even though the phones and network are still exactly the same.

[Multiple users on Twitter](#) are now reporting that they're seeing the new 5G E icon on devices running the latest iOS 12.2 beta 2, which was released earlier today. The new icon isn't there for everyone, presumably because it will only appear in cities where AT&T's [5G Evolution network](#) — the company's [intentionally misleading name](#) for its LTE network that it seems to hope customers will confuse for actual, next-generation 5G networks — is active. Additionally, [9to5Mac reports](#) that the new logo seems to be limited to Apple's newest XR, XS, and XS Max iPhones for now.

Just like in 2012, Apple has not magically inserted new, next-gen radio chipsets into its phones via software updates, nor has it unlocked some latent capability in its phones to make them faster than they were before. They're the same iPhones that are running the same hardware and software and connecting to the same LTE network at the same speeds they did before — just with a new logo.

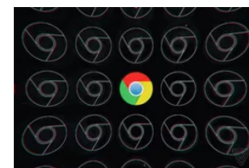
In short, it's the [exact same marketing scam](#) that AT&T pulled when it began rolling out its [5G E logo on Android phones last month](#), with an extra dose of Apple's complicity in pulling this scam on its own customers. It appears that Apple even helped AT&T design a new version of its 5G E logo to match the iPhone's menubar, down to the smaller "E" that AT&T seems to hope you'll confuse with real 5G.



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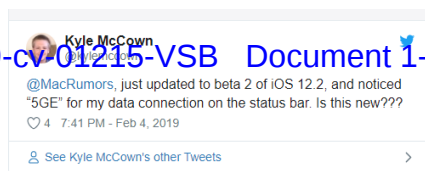
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AT&T, Apple, and all of the other Android manufacturers that have already agreed to this can call it "5G E" all they want — and apparently, they will — but that doesn't make 5G E a 5G network, nor does it mean that 5G E phones will get 5G speeds. It's just like how writing a few extra zeros with a sharpie on a \$1 bill doesn't make it worth \$100.



Much like with Apple and AT&T's 4G scam seven years ago, it's easy to see why the two companies would want to mislead customers like this. Apple isn't expected to release a 5G iPhone until sometime in 2020 [when the market is more mature](#), which is a similar strategy to the [company's later adoption of LTE](#). In lieu of an actual 5G iPhone to compete with the upcoming wave of [LG](#), [Samsung](#), and [Huawei](#) 5G flagships that are expected to roll out as soon as Mobile World Congress at the end of the month, slapping AT&T's 5G E logo on its current and future phones is the next best way to get a "5G" phone that it can market against those real next-gen devices while it waits.

AT&T gets the benefit of claiming that it has the only "5G" iPhone around due to the technicality of its branding, while its competition is stuck offering Apple devices that are still only on LTE, despite the fact that they're still all the same hardware and running on the same LTE networks.

Given the success of the 4G / HSPA+ / LTE scam seven years ago, it's not surprising that Apple and AT&T would try again. But it sure is disappointing that with all of the advances we've made in mobile technology since then, the misleading marketing tactics have remained the same.

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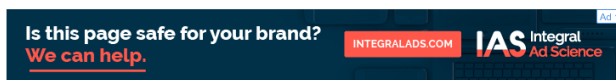
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